



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 1941.

ANNOUNCE NEW RULES FOR MIGRATORY-BIRD HUNTERS

Duck hunters will again have 60-day seasons in each of three zones and a daily bag limit of 10 birds, according to the 1941 rules for hunting migratory game birds announced today (August 20) by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

Changes in the duck-hunting rules outlined by Secretary Ickes remove canvasbacks and ruddy ducks from the list of species that are limited to 3 in the daily bag, legalize in 15 States the possession of one wood duck, provide an open season for Puerto Rico, transfer Ohio to the northern zone and New Mexico to the southern zone, and prohibit the use of cattle, horses, or mules as blinds.

Other amendments to the migratory bird hunting regulations close the seasons on Wilson's snipes, reduce the mourning dove seasons to 42 days, increase the blue-geese bag limit to 6 a day if no other geese are taken, close the season on snow geese in Idaho to extend additional protection to the rare trumpeter swan, and provide special 3-a-week bag limits for geese in heavy concentration areas in certain counties of North Carolina, Illinois, and California.

Adopted by Secretary Ickes after recommendations had been made by the Fish and Wildlife Service following investigations by its staff of naturalists and consultations with State conservation authorities, the amended regulations were approved by President Roosevelt on August 16, in accordance with an Act of Congress giving effect to a treaty with Canada signed 25 years ago, on August 16, 1916. The Act was later amended to include a similar treaty with Mexico.

Sixty Days of Wildfowling

The 60-day waterfowl seasons provided in the new regulations begin on October 1 in the northern-zone States, on October 16 in the intermediate zone, November 2 in the southern zone, December 15 in Puerto Rico, October 1 in Fur Districts 1 and 3 of Alaska, and on September 1 in the rest of the Territory.

States in the northern zone, including Ohio, which was in the intermediate zone last year, are: Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana.

Intermediate-zone States are: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and California.

Including New Mexico, formerly in the intermediate zone, the southern-zone States are: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Waterfowl seasons apply to coots also, as formerly.

Connecticut has been added this year to the list of other New England States having seasons for taking scoters, sometimes called sea coots, in open coastal waters, beyond outer harbor lines. These birds may thus be taken in Maine and New Hampshire from September 15 to 30 and in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island from September 15 to October 15, and thereafter from land or water during the open seasons for other waterfowl in these States.

As in recent years no open seasons are provided for swans or Ross's geese, or for snow geese and brants in States that border on the Atlantic Ocean. The season on snow geese has also been closed in Idaho this year.

Protect Snow Geese to Save Swans

Closing the Idaho season on snow geese, said Secretary Ickes, should remove any possible excuse for the killing of trumpeter swans by hunters who confuse these two white birds. Breeding in the United States only at the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and in Yellowstone National Park, the rare trumpeter swans, which are threatened with extinction, he explained, wander over into Idaho during the waterfowl season and have occasionally been shot by mistake for snow geese.

Seasons Opened on Wood Ducks

In 12 States of the southern zone and 3 intermediate-zone States bordering on the southern zone the waterfowl seasons this year apply also to wood ducks, but only one of these ducks may be included in the daily bag or possessed by a hunter.

Provided in the general region in which wood ducks concentrate in the largest numbers, the seasons on these birds, said Secretary Ickes, are designed to permit hunters who accidentally kill a wood duck to possess the bird, which otherwise would be wasted, and for this reason only one wood duck is permitted in a hunter's possession. The wood duck with protection has increased in numbers, he explained, and conscientious sportsmen have unintentionally violated the Federal law by killing one of these birds.

Emphasizing the desirability of continuing special protection for this species which is considered by many to be the most beautiful duck, Secretary Ickes urged hunters to avoid shooting these birds. The special accidental-killing allowance made this year, he said, is admittedly an experiment, and if there is evidence of abuse he predicted that the wood duck would be returned to the list of fully protected species.

The States in which a wood duck may be taken legally and possessed during the open waterfowl seasons are: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

Changes Made in Bag Limits

Bag limits on ducks are set at 10 a day, or 20 in possession, the same as last year, but with the wood duck special limit of 1 included and the provision continued that not more than 3 buffleheads or 3 redheads or 3 of these two species together may be in the daily bag and not more than 6 among the ducks possessed.

Canvasbacks and ruddy ducks, formerly grouped with the redheads and buffleheads, have been restored to the list of species with the 10-and-20 bag and possession limits.

Two important changes in bag limits on geese were pointed out.

The limit on geese and brant (except snow geese in Idaho, snow geese and brant in Atlantic Coast States, and Ross's geese throughout the country, which may not be hunted) is again set at 3 a day or 6 in possession, but in addition hunters may take 3 blue geese a day, and they may have 6 blue geese in possession in addition to the general 6-geese possession limit. The original 3 or 6, it was explained, may also include or consist entirely of blue geese, and it is thus possible for a hunter to take 6 blue geese a day or have 12 in possession if he takes or possesses no other kinds of geese.

Another bag-limit amendment to the regulations this year provides that "no person may take more than 3 geese in the aggregate of all kinds during any 7 consecutive days" in Hyde County, N. C.; Alexander County, Ill.; or Siskiyou County, Calif.

"These special county bag limits," said Secretary Ickes, "represent an experiment in Federal game management which will be closely watched. Records show that in recent years the goose kills in these counties have been altogether too heavy. If such local measures as the special bag limits provided this year prove successful in solving such problems it will obviously make it possible to regulate the kill on such problem areas without changing general regulations."

At Horseshoe Lake, in Alexander County, Ill., Secretary Ickes pointed out, the goose kill by hunters has at times exceeded one third of the total number of these birds using the area, while excessive numbers have also been taken at Lake Mattamuskeet in North Carolina and Tule Lake in California. At Tule Lake the bird most affected is the diminutive Cackling Goose, almost the entire continental population of this species concentrating there during the shooting seasons.

"On the other side of the picture," said Secretary Ickes, "we have the blue goose, which has increased much more rapidly than others. A larger crop warrants a larger harvest, and the bag limit on these geese has thus been increased so that a hunter may take 6 a day if no other kinds of geese are taken."

Other bag and possession limits set by the Federal regulations remain the same as last year. Bag limits are as follows: Rails and gallinules (except sora and coot), 15 in the aggregate of all kinds; sora, 15; coot, 25; woodcock, 4; mourning and white-winged doves, 12 in the aggregate of both kinds; band-tailed pigeons, 10. Possession limits on these birds are the same as the daily bag limits except that hunters may have in possession 8 woodcocks, or two days' bag.

Specify Means for Taking Birds

Outlining the means by which migratory game birds may be taken legally, the ~~new~~ regulations continue the prohibition of the use of bait or live decoys and in addition prohibit "the taking of waterfowl by means, aid, or use of cattle, horses, or mules."

Hunters, it is provided, may use shotguns not larger than 10 gauge or bows and arrows, as formerly, and the 3-shell limit on repeating shotguns, either hand-operated or auto-loading, is continued.

All persons over 16 years of age hunting migratory waterfowl are required to have with them an unexpired Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp validated by their signature on the stamp. These stamps, commonly called duck stamps, may be purchased at post offices for one dollar.

Shooting hours specified by the regulations remain the same as last year, as follows: Waterfowl and coots, sunrise to 4 p.m.; and rails and gallinules (other than coots), woodcocks, mourning doves, white-winged doves, and band-tailed pigeons, sunrise to sunset.

Mourning Dove Seasons Shortened

The seasons on mourning doves have been shortened to a maximum of 42 consecutive days. The shortened seasons, said Secretary Ickes, were necessary because the status of the mourning dove, sometimes called turtle dove, was last winter found to be worse than anticipated. The severe storm that killed many woodcocks in January 1940 also played havoc with the mourning-dove population in the southeastern States, and the winter studies indicated that the bird's numbers are still "decidedly unsatisfactory."

Secretary Ickes said that in almost all areas in the southeastern States where the mourning dove is an important game species, the bird was so scarce that sportsmen, naturalists, and game administrators joined in a demand that steps be taken to give the dove better protection.

"The seasons have, accordingly, been selected to permit some shooting but also to prevent excessive slaughter," Secretary Ickes said. "The mourning dove is a prolific breeder and will undoubtedly come back if given a proper chance."

The open seasons on mourning doves are as follows, both dates inclusive:

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, December 1 to January 11; Arizona, California, Kansas, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, September 1 to October 12; Arkansas, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, September 16 to October 27.

Idaho, September 1 to September 10; Illinois, September 1 to September 30; Minnesota, September 16 to September 30; Oregon, September 1 to September 15.

Texas, in Yoakum, Terry, Lynn, Garza, Kent, Stonewall, Haskell, Throckmorton, Young, Jack, Wise, Denton, Collin, and Hunt Counties, and all counties

north thereof, and in Parker, Tarrant, Dallas, Rockwall, Kaufman, Johnson, Hopkins, Delta, Franklin, and Ellis Counties, September 1 to October 12; in remainder of State, September 16 to October 27.

Continue Shortened Woodcock Seasons

No changes have been made in the length of woodcock hunting seasons since last year. The shortened seasons of 15 days, introduced in 1940, continue, Secretary Ickes explained, because the woodcock population has not recovered from the severe reduction in numbers caused by storm disasters in January and April 1940.

Investigations in the eastern States and Maritime provinces, where the woodcock summers, indicate that the population is still below normal, he said.

"While the investigations showed that the numerical status of this bird was somewhat improved in certain parts of its breeding range," Secretary Ickes explained, "the extent of the improvement is rather disappointing and it is thus necessary to hold the take to a minimum."

The open seasons are as follows, both dates inclusive.

That part of New York lying north of the tracks of the main line of the New York Central Railroad extending from Buffalo to Albany and north of the tracks of the main line of the Boston & Albany Railroad extending from Albany to the Massachusetts State line, October 1 to October 15. New York south of the line described above, except Long Island, October 15 to October 29. In Long Island, November 1 to November 15.

Minnesota, Vermont, and Wisconsin, October 1 to October 15; Connecticut and Indiana, October 15 to October 29; Maine, New Hampshire, and Ohio, October 10 to October 24; New Jersey and Rhode Island, November 1 to November 15;

Massachusetts, October 20 to November 3; Arkansas and Oklahoma, December 1 to December 15; Louisiana and Mississippi, December 15 to December 29; Delaware and Maryland, November 15 to November 29; Michigan, in Upper Peninsula, October 1 to October 15, and in remainder of Michigan, October 15 to October 29; Pennsylvania, October 16 to October 30; Missouri, November 10 to November 24; Virginia, November 20 to December 4; and West Virginia, October 17 to October 31.

Other Seasons Set

Other seasons provided in the regulations govern the hunting of rails, gallinules, white-winged doves, and band-tailed pigeons.

The season on gallinules and rails, excepting coots, is from September 1 to November 30, inclusive, except as follows: Alabama, November 20 to January 31; Louisiana, November 1 to January 31; Maine, October 1 to November 30; Massachusetts and New York, October 16 to December 14; Minnesota, September 16 to November 30; Puerto Rico, December 15 to February 12; Tennessee, November 2 to December 31; Wisconsin, October 1 to November 29; California, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, no open season.

Coot seasons are the same as those for waterfowl.

White-winged dove seasons are as follows: Arizona, September 1 to September 15, and Texas, September 16 to September 25.

The open seasons on band-tailed pigeons are as follows: Arizona, New Mexico, and Washington, September 16 to 30; California, December 1 to 15; and Oregon, September 1 to 15.

No Jacksnipe Season

The regulations this year provide no open season for Wilson's snipes, sometimes called jacksnipes, and these birds will thus be given full protection under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Referring to a recent report from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Secretary Ickes pointed out that in recent years investigators have found the snipe's numbers "startlingly small" in comparison with those observed by other naturalists a decade or two ago. These birds, he explained, lay only 4 eggs to a nest, raise only one brood a year, and are thus not able to withstand excessive losses.

Closing the seasons on Wilson's snipes, the Secretary predicted, will prevent this species from going down the road toward extermination.

Copies of the complete regulations may be obtained as soon as available from the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.